

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

For the Examiner's convenience, a list of all claims is included below.

1-6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) Apparatus for formation of a composite video image, the apparatus comprising:

a shadow control module that receives a foreground video image signal and generates a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

a shadow generation module that receives the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generates and issues a foreground shadow signal FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

a shadowing module that receives the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generates a modified background image signal, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image, wherein said shadowing module forms a sum signal  $\beta$  FGSh + (1 -  $\beta'$ ) BG, as said modified background image signal, where  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  are real numbers lying in a range [0,1], selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image.

8. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein ~~said shadowing module forms a sum signal  $\beta$  FGSh + (1 -  $\beta'$ ) BG, as said modified background~~

image signal, where  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  are real numbers lying in a range  $[0,1]$   $\beta$  is less than  $\beta'$  thereby limiting the intensity of the background image.

9. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein ~~said selected~~ numbers  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  are chosen to be equal  $\beta$  is greater than  $\beta'$  thereby limiting the intensity of the foreground shadow.

10-19 (Canceled)

20. (Currently amended) A method for formation of a composite video image, the method comprising:

receiving a foreground video image signal and generating a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

receiving the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generating and issuing a foreground shadow signal, FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

receiving the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal and generating a modified background image signal, MBG, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image by forming a sum signal,  $\beta \text{ FGSh} + (1 - \beta') \text{ BG}$ , as a modified background image signal, where  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  are real numbers lying in a range  $[0,1]$ , selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein ~~said process of generating said modified background image signal comprises forming a sum signal~~  $\beta \text{ FGSh} + (1 - \beta') \text{ BG}$ , where  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  are selected real numbers lying in a range  $[0,1]$   $\beta$  is less than  $\beta'$  thereby limiting the intensity of the background image.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, ~~further comprising choosing said selected numbers  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  to be equal~~ wherein  $\beta$  is greater than  $\beta'$  thereby limiting the intensity of the foreground shadow signal.

23-30 (Canceled)

31. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable code means embodied therein for producing a composite video image including portions of at least one foreground image and of at least one background image;

computer readable program code means for receiving a foreground video image signal FG and generates a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

computer readable program code means for receiving the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generating and issues a foreground shadow signal FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

computer readable program code means for receiving the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generating a modified background image signal, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each

selected pixel of the background image by forming a sum signal  $\beta$  FGSh + (1-  
 $\beta'$ ) BG as said modified background image signal, where  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  are selected real  
numbers lying in a range [0,1], selected so as to limit either an intensity of the  
foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image.

32. (Currently amended) The article of claim 31, ~~further comprising computer~~  
~~readable program code means for forming a sum signal  $\beta$  FGSh + (1 -  $\beta'$ ) BG as said~~  
~~modified background image signal, where  $\beta$  and  $\beta'$  are selected real numbers lying~~  
~~in a range [0,1]  $\beta$  is less than  $\beta'$  thereby limiting the intensity of the background~~  
image signal .